

Members of MSU Faculty Senate,

I am writing today in hopes of sharing useful information regarding your upcoming vote. My recent visit to MSU left me concerned that critical information has gone undisclosed to the senate, and I'd like to clarify if possible.

Robert's Rules of Order

As an outside observer, I was concerned that the senate was not being allowed to operate under normal Robert's Rules. There were two instances that seem critical to address.

Ballot Vote: it is a completely standard motion in Robert's Rules of order to ask for a ballot vote. The Chronicle noted that:

one faculty senator said she'd like to use secret ballots if a vote is held in two weeks because the issue is so political. However, Michael Babcock, Senate chair, said after the meeting that would not be possible.

There is absolutely no reason that such a motion would be impossible. Many have faculty confided that they feel administrative pressure, and fear retaliation, for voting their conscience. It is critical that the senate president allow a ballot vote, and any refusal to do so would have to be entirely the result of the president's personal preference, rather than procedural impossibility.

Recusal of Interested Parties: Another issue that was of concern was that Koch-funded faculty were making motions to end debate, and appeared ready to vote on the issue. Seeing a senator making a motion, let alone voting on it, when they have a direct financial interest in the outcome was, frankly, shocking. According to Tracy Elig, the External Director of MSU University Relations:

The MSU Faculty Senate bylaws contain no discussion of how the body is to address concerns of perceived conflicts of interest in votes before the Senate. The MSU Faculty Senate operates by Roberts Rules of Order (RONR) to conduct its meeting. When bylaws do not address a specific issue, Roberts Rules of Order are considered the default operating rules. Roberts Rules of Order does address conflict of interest, but not in the way many people anticipate:

Under the rules in RONR, no member can be compelled to refrain from voting simply because it is perceived that he or she may have some "conflict of interest" with respect to the motion under consideration. If a member has a direct personal or pecuniary (monetary) interest in a motion under consideration not common to other members, the rule in RONR is that he should not vote on such a motion, but even then he or she cannot be compelled to refrain from voting. [RONR (11th ed.), p. 407, ll. 21-31.] – From: <http://www.robertsrules.com/faq.html#3>

Koch Industries Stands to Profit from IRAEA/CRAEA

According the the CRAEA proposal, the:

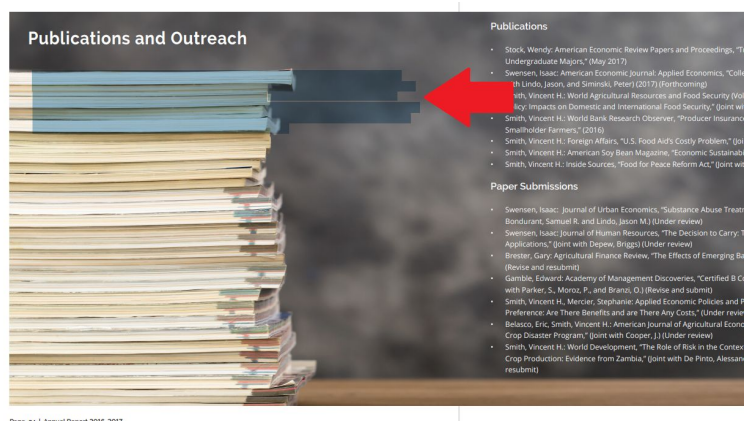
proposed center will also make research results publicly accessible by producing white papers, policy issues papers, and other communications that inform law makers, policy advisors and the general public on critical policy and regulatory issues.

It is absolutely critical to note that Koch Industries is one of the largest privately owned corporations in the nation, second behind Cargill. Like Cargill, Koch Industries holds large interests in industrial agriculture. A few Koch Industries subsidiaries worth noting include [Matador Cattle](#), [Koch Agronomic Services](#), [Koch Ag and Energy Solutions](#), and [Koch Fertilizer](#).

While the following language does not appear in the 2016 CRAEA proposal, IRAEA's annual report shows a clear and expressed objectives that include "research on agricultural policy and fertilizer industry regulation."

In the pdf of IRAEA's annual report, the introductory paragraph of "Publications and Outreach" is hidden behind an image, and is entirely obscured. But this text can be highlighted, copied, and pasted (try it [here](#)), reads:

As a result of IRAEA funding, several research articles have been accepted for publication in leading economics journals and several other papers have been submitted to leading economics field journals, including American Journal of Agricultural Economics and the Journal of Urban Economics. Several research papers were accepted for presentation at regional and national academic meetings, numerous blog posts and podcasts **based on the research on agricultural policy and fertilizer industry regulation** have been presented, and two master's theses have been completed.



KOCH FERTILIZER

Koch Fertilizer (refers to Koch Fertilizer, LLC, and its affiliates) [claims](#) to “cover global demand [and] have the capability to manufacture, market and distribute more than 13 million tonnes of

fertilizer products annually.” They [claim to be](#) “one of the world's largest producers and marketers of fertilizers,” whose “distribution network covers global demand.”

KF and its subsidiaries have steadily purchased, leased, upgraded and expanded its fertilizer manufacturing, supply and distribution capabilities worldwide. Building out from a strong position in North America – a position that was enhanced significantly by the purchase in 2003 of Farmland’s nitrogen fertilizer business – KF has become a far-reaching provider of fertilizer products to markets around the world.

Looking through the research listed in the IRAEA annual report, there is considerable work being done that has direct connections to Koch Industries fertilizer subsidiaries.

Three Koch recipients, Vince Smith, Joe Atwood, and Eric Belasco have published during the first year of Koch foundation funding, a paper entitled “Does Participation in Public Works Programs Encourage Fertilizer Use in Rural Ethiopia?” which considers barriers to international fertilizer use in Africa, musing:

A sixth of the world’s population receives inadequate nutrition. The problem is especially severe in Africa where agricultural sectors are dominated by subsistence farmers. African small-holder farmers could double crop yields by doubling their fertilizer use. Yet, in many countries, subsistence farmers do not utilize advanced inputs that are apparently available to them at subsidized prices. This study evaluates the impact of food aid programs on agricultural productivity via changes in participants’ input decisions. . . Increasing the use modern agricultural inputs (in particular fertilizer) is seen by many agricultural experts as a prerequisite to increase agricultural production and therefore reduce the risks of food insecurity and chronic poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. ([International Journal of Food and Agriculture Economics](#), 2016)

A look at Koch Fertilizer’s own documentation, [“The Expanding Footprint of Koch Fertilizer,”](#) the company shows a growing presence in Africa.

Other IRAEA projects pertaining to fertilizer include:

- Gary Brester, professor, Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, for “The Effects of Regulations on the Commercial Fertilizer Industry.” An undergraduate Koch fellow, John Walker, a senior agricultural business major, worked with Dr. Gary Brester on “The Effects of Regulations on the Commercial Fertilizer Industry.”

KOCH AG & ENERGY

One MSU Koch fellow cites research interests including the “U.S. food supply chain” but in particular “the direct impact of natural gas industry regulations on the U.S. fertilizer industry.”

Koch Energy Services, LLC a subsidiary of [Koch Ag & Energy Solutions, LLC](#), markets “natural gas and power throughout North America,” and provides “a full line of services, including purchasing, sales, transportation, scheduling, storage, hedging, asset optimization, and market analysis.

Brester and Anton Bekkerman presented a talk at the Western Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting: “Natural Gas Prices, Fertilizer Production, and Environmental Regulations”

MATADOR CATTLE

A workshop planned by IRAEA indicates new research directions into policy that would impact further Koch Industries’ subsidiaries, including Matador Cattle:

organized by Dr. Eric Belasco and Dr. Anton Bekkerman will focus on trade-related regulations affecting Montana’s agricultural export markets for beef and wheat. Such regulations include age verification systems, natural beef labeling, growth hormones, country of origin labeling, GMO crop and organic labeling, as well as the NAFTA and WTO agreements. The workshop will target Montana stakeholders and policymakers, including commodity and general agricultural interest groups and legislators.

Joe Atwood, professor, Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, for “Freedom, Government, and Prosperity.” ([Proposal](#)):

The purpose of this analysis is to quantify the influence of government institutions on the general well-being as measured by the gross domestic product and the influence on financial markets as measured by interest rates. Government institution performance measures have been developed by various entities. Statistical techniques will be used to quantify the effect of increasing institutional performance on the general well-being and financial markets.

Ghost of CRAEA Future: Cautionary Tale of Iowa State University

President of Iowa’s Board of Regents and Iowa agriculture industrialist, Bruce Rastetter, has continued to exert undue influence over Iowa State University faculty to further the political interests some of the nation’s largest agricultural corporations. At Iowa State University, Rastetter’s Summit Group is sponsoring (and Rastetter himself is hosting) agricultural policy “junkets” with legislators from around the country attending.

Other sponsors in partnership are , Koch Nitrogen, Monsanto, Cargill, DuPont, Dow AgroSciences, POET, the Iowa Soybean Association, Iowa Pork Producers Association, and others. The Urban Ag Academy is a weekend conference that uses industry funded academics

to provide industry viewpoints to legislators on matters including the Farm Bill, GMO safety and labeling, antibiotic use, water policy and climate policy.

Several of the faculty involved in the Urban Ag Academy are funded by Rastetter, Koch, and other agricultural interests. Among the donors funding these faculty at the Urban Ag Academy are Rastetter himself, the Charles Koch Foundation, PIONEER (Dupont), and others.

Several of the faculty and organizations involved were also involved in the failed land grab in Tanzania that Bruce Rastetter's Agrisol attempted with the help of ISU. Organizations involved in the ISU/Agrisol Tanzania deal at the time included Monsanto and DuPont. Several faculty that were involved in Tanzania are now involved in the Urban Ag Academy include; David Acker, Wendy Winterstein, Kevin Kimle, and Dermot Hayes. Though the events are an initiative of Iowa State Rep. Helen Miller (and her Relim LLC.), a failed attempt to get legislative funding documented the events as "an annual conference relating to urban and rural agriculture" hosted by the Board of Regents.

Highlights from the Urban Ag Academy conferences (2011-2015) include from 2012:

"Rounding out the curriculum are presentations from producer and farm groups, experts on agricultural education and tourism, updates on ethanol and the 2012 Farm Bill." [Press Release](#)

"8:00-10:00 pm Tour of facility and fun time!" at Meadows Racetrack and Casino

Video of these presentations show lawmakers being told clearly false things about GMOs, anti-biotics, etc.

- Brester and Anton Bekkerman presented a talk at the Western Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting: "Natural Gas Prices, Fertilizer Production, and Environmental Regulations"

American Enterprise Institute

The American Enterprise Institute is a leading free-market think tank within Charles Koch's donor network. It has received \$1,846,256 from the Charles Koch Foundation since 2004.

While many free-market think tanks are receive funding from Koch, AEI is much closer, holding a leadership position within Koch's secretive donor network. In [leaked documents](#), AEI president Arthur Brooks is seen leading panels at Koch's secretive donor summits. He instructs potential donors that "free enterprise is more than just an economic system- it is a moral imperative, and we must defend it at all costs."

Members of [Koch's donor network](#) that sit on [AEI's board of trustees](#) include Ravenel Curry, Clifford Asness, and William Walton, as well as Betsy DeVos whose parents are Koch network

collaborators. This network of donors have used two anonymizing donor advised funds, DonorsTrust and Donors Capital Fund, to provide AEI with over \$24,843,49 between 2002 and 2016.

Vince Smith is the [Director](#) of AEI's Agricultural Policy Research Program. MSU's IRAEA is greatly subsidizing AEI's political activities and supporting their existing program, including Smith's policy program and AEI's agriculture policy program called the *American Boondoggle*.

IRAEA's annual report lists several policy papers that Smith published at AEI, with AEI co-authors. Yet, instead of listing them as AEI publications, the IRAEA report lists versions that were published in magazines, obscuring the actual source of the work. Three of Smith's publications listed:

Smith, Vincent H.: Foreign Affairs, "U.S. Food Aid's Costly Problem," (Joint with Nabil, Ryan) (2016)

Smith, Vincent H.: American Soy Bean Magazine, "Economic Sustainability," (2016)

Smith, Vincent H.: Inside Sources, "Food for Peace Reform Act," (Joint with Glauber, Joseph W. and Nabil, Ryan) (2017)

Are all editorial versions of AEI policy papers, some explicitly part of American Boondoggle:

"U.S. Food Aid's Costly Problem" ([American Enterprise Institute](#)), alternatively published in the magazine [Foreign Affairs](#).

"Economic Sustainability" ([American Enterprise Institute](#)), alternatively published in the American Soybean Associations industry magazine, [American Soybean](#)

"Food for Peace Reform Act" ([American Enterprise Institute](#)), alternatively published in the online magazine [Inside Sources](#).

In each publication, all of the authors are all AEI staff.

An overwhelming number of MSU IRAEA fellows have ties to AEI. Eric Belasco is an AEI [Visiting Scholar](#) "where he focuses on research related to agricultural policy." Anton Bekkerman is a contributor to AEI's [American Boondoggle](#), and an AEI policy analyst on ag policy [2011](#) and [2018](#) (co-author w/ Belasco and Smith). Gary Brester is a collaborator on AEI's American Boondoggle project ([2011](#)) and AEI contributor ([2014](#)), 2017 presented "Financial Market Regulations", at [AEI Agricultural Policy Workshop](#), pro-GMO policy author [2018](#). Brester has also studied Koch Industries in a 1997 paper "Koch Agriculture Company's Domestic Milling Decisions: The Western Kansas Flour Mill Project." Review of Agricultural Economics, (Fall/Winter 1997).

The two IRAEA conferences to seen so far, the previous conference on poverty, and the upcoming conference on healthcare, are disproportionately stacked with AEI staff members. One such staffer who spoke at the poverty conference made the assertion that "there is no

working poor.” This is an alarming claim coming from scholars funded by the wealthiest families in the nation, especially when the sponsors of the conference were not disclosed to the public. We see a similar lack of disclosure in the publications listed in IRAEA’s annual report.

Moreover, we see many IRAEA fellows are cited in [study of rotating door of ag economists](#) advocating industry policy, which should concern the MSU community greatly.

Thank you for your time,
Ralph Wilson
UnKoch My Campus